



Sheila Dixon

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Mayor Dixon Signs Baltimore City Gun Offender Registry Into Law

Baltimore, MD (October 1, 2007) – Mayor Sheila Dixon was joined by Baltimore State’s Attorney Patricia Jessamy, Acting Police Commissioner Frederick Bealefeld, and members of the Baltimore City Council to sign City Council Bill 07-0738, which establishes a Gun Offender Registry, into law. The legislation was created to help the Baltimore Police Department monitor the city’s most violent offenders.

“I want to make Baltimore the toughest place in the country on gun crimes,” said Mayor Dixon. “The Gun Offender Registry will provide the Baltimore Police Department with a tool to improve pro-active monitoring of gun offenders. It will send a clear message to gun offenders that we know where they are and that we are watching them.”

Baltimore’s Gun Offender Registry will require individuals convicted of gun offenses in Baltimore City to register their current address and report to the Baltimore Police Department every six months for a period of three years following their conviction or period of incarceration. Within 48 hours of conviction, each gun offender will be required to file their names and aliases, a photograph, and a confirmed address. Failure to comply with the registration requirement is a misdemeanor and punishable by a fine of not more than \$1000 or imprisonment of not more than 12 months or both.

A key component of Mayor Dixon’s Crime Strategy is targeted enforcement, and the most important target is illegal guns and the people who carry them. Data shows that persons convicted of gun offenses are re-arrested at a high rate, often committing new criminal offenses while armed. Recent GunStat statistics show that 42% of defendants charged with felony gun crimes have prior gun arrests. In addition, over 50% of suspects arrested on homicide charges have prior gun convictions.

Baltimore’s Gun Offender Registry will help Baltimore combat gun violence by enabling pro-active monitoring of gun offenders – to prevent them from re-offending and increasing prompt apprehension of these gun offenders if they do engage in criminal activity.

"I am pleased that Mayor Dixon stands with me today, affirming my commitment over the past decade, to reduce the grip of deadly violence that the illegal possession of handguns afflicts on our community," said State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy. "Our shared concern and vision for our citizens commits us to work together and to use every tool in our toolbox to protect public safety and make our citizens safe."

Baltimore is the second city in the United States to pass a gun offender registry. It is modeled after New York City's registry, which was the first in the nation. It differs from New York's by being a public rather than private registry.

"I am grateful to the City Council for passing this important piece of legislation," said Mayor Dixon. "In our fight against violent crime, this will be a useful tool to help the police take criminals off the streets."

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